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DAREDEVIL™

1

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TUCCI

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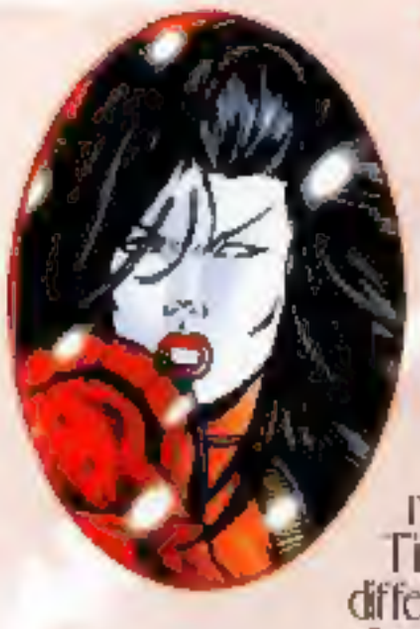
after

POLLAIUOLO

THE MOTHER OF ALL BATTLES...



Ana Ishikawa has lost her faith. Raised by her mother as a devout Christian, she was also taught to be a sohei (warrior-monk) by her grandfather. Even as she sought justice as the ruthless Shi, Ana fought a losing battle to reconcile her murderous acts with her deeply held faith in God. It is this inner turmoil that made her vulnerable to the Makoto - a renegade offshoot of the ninja sect known as "The Hand."

Attorney Matt Murdock has lost his faith. Recently, he defended a man named Timmons against wounded NYPD detective Peter DeNyse who claimed Timmons tried to have him killed. As usual, Murdock won his court case. The difference this time was finding out he'd been on the wrong side of the case-that his client, Timmons, was guilty as sin! Matt's always had faith in the law, in the system. But now that faith has vanished, and not even his actions as the masked crime-fighter Daredevil can clear the doubts that trouble his heart.

Masao, leader of the Makoto, is a man who's faith is strong. His plan is as simple as it is unstoppable. He will use the woman-warrior Shi to bring the Makoto-Oni-the demon his band of ninja worship-out of Hell and into this world. And he will have the added satisfaction of seeing Shi slay Daredevil, the hated enemy that the Hand has failed repeatedly to destroy.

Thus far, Masao has succeeded in bending Shi to the Oni's will by means of a mystical medallion placed around her neck. Now, just as Daredevil is defeating a band of Makoto high atop a Manhattan building, Shi attacks-her mind no longer her own, and the hideous strength of the Makoto-Oni coursing through her limbs...

SNEAK ATTACK!

Included in this issue is a special Crusade Sneak Attack Edition preview of the upcoming TCB series, due out in March. Just flip this book over when you finish SHI/DAREDEVIL and join former NYPD Detective Pete DeNyse as he takes the law into his own hands to bring down Timmons-the copkiller who just might become the next mayor of New York City!

In Loving Memory...

A few weeks ago, we received the sad news that Tom Sniegoski's dog Spencer had passed away. Tom, one of the writers who conceived this crossover tale, had owned Spencer for almost a decade. He didn't merely lose a pet...he lost a family member, and our hearts go out to him.

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ANA, WHAT ARE YOU DOING?! NO-- HE'LL FALL!!

YOUR NAME IS DAREDEVIL, AND, SUPPOSEDLY, YOUR SUPERHUMAN SENSES MAKE YOU A MAN WITHOUT FEAR. EXCEPT RIGHT NOW YOU ARE AFRAID...THAT YOU'VE JUST MADE A VERY BAD MISTAKE.

A MOMENT AGO, YOU WERE MOPPING THE FLOOR WITH ONE OF THE MAKOTO--A RENEGADE BRANCH OF THE NINJA SECT KNOWN AS "THE HAND."

SUDDENLY, YOU'RE FIGHTING OFF A MURDEROUS SURPRISE ATTACK BY ONE ANA ISHIKAWA, ALSO KNOWN AS SHI.

THE MISTAKE WAS LETTING GO OF THE MAKOTO GUY, WHO MUST BE A NINJA SCHOOL DROPOUT 'CAUSE HE'S BACK-PEDALLING LIKE CRAZY--NOT A GOOD MOVE WHEN YOU'RE THIRTY STORIES ABOVE FIFTY-SEVENTH STREET...

WHAT DO YOU CARE?! IF HE DIES, THEN HE'S SIMPLY ANOTHER *SACRIFICE* TO THE LORD OF THE MAKOTO!

JUST AS *YOU* WILL BE, DEVIL!

THE TIMBRE OF HER VOICE TELLS YOU SHE'S RECKLESS, OUT OF CONTROL.

YOUR SUPERHUMAN SENSES DETECT A LEDGE BENEATH THE FALLING ASSASSIN. HIS CHANCES OF SURVIVAL ARE GOOD...

...WHICH IS MORE THAN YOU CAN SAY FOR YOURSELF!

STILL, YOU WONDER: IF ANA'S WITH THE MAKOTO NOW, WHY WAS THAT NINJA SO SPOOKED?

THE ONLY PLACE YOU CAN HIDE FROM ME IS IN *HELL!!*

PERHAPS IT'S SOMETHING IN HER EYES...

...SOME FURY THAT'S DOWNRIGHT TERRIFYING TO BEHOLD. AND, FOR A BRIEF SECOND, YOU'RE ALMOST GLAD YOUR BLINDNESS PREVENTS YOU FROM SEEING IT.

YOU ALSO WONDER HOW SHE MUST VIEW YOU THROUGH SUCH CORRUPTED VISION.

I DON'T WANT TO RUN, ANA. I WANT TO TALK. LISTEN TO ME... LOOK WHAT THEY'VE DONE TO YOU! I'VE BEEN THROUGH THIS BEFORE--

YOU WASTE YOUR BREATH! I KNOW THE DEVIL IS A MASTER OF WORDPLAY. YOU WILL NOT DECEIVE ME INTO BETRAYING MY NEWLY-FOUND FAITH!

MASAO HAS GIVEN ME INNER PEACE AND POWER! WHILE YOU...YOU STALK ME FROM ABOVE, THEN HESITATE TO FINISH THE FIGHT YOU CAME HERE FOR!

WITH A SHOCK YOU REALIZE THAT THE MIND GAMES SHE ACCUSES YOU OF HAVE ALREADY BEEN PLAYING HER.

THEY MUST HAVE HYPNOTIZED OR DRUGGED HER...OR BOTH. SO WHATEVER YOU DO WILL BE SEEN THROUGH A HAZE OF HATRED.

YOU'RE A PUPPET, ANA. *THINK* ABOUT IT. DID THEY GIVE YOU A JAPANESE TREASURE AS PART OF YOUR INITIATION?

EVER STOP TO CONSIDER WHERE THEY GOT IT?

EVER CONSIDER THAT YOU'VE JOINED A TROOP OF THIEVES AND MURDERERS?

YOU ARE DISGRACE, HYAKU. I SHOULD HAVE LET YOU FALL TO YOUR DEATH!

FIRST YOU DIVULGE OUR PLANS TO *MURDOCK*, THEN YOU FAIL TO DETAIN HIM UNTIL THE WOMAN WAS FULLY PREPARED!

FOR THOUGH THE STRENGTH OF THE ONI IS IN HER BLOOD...HER HEART MAY STILL BE DIVIDED. IF SO, OUR HOLD ON HER CAN STILL BE SHATTERED.

YOU REALIZE SHE WON'T LISTEN TO REASON. SO, WHEN IN DOUBT, APPLY A FORCEFUL BLOW TO THE HEAD...AND KEEP YOUR FINGERS CROSSED.

AND *NOW*, MASAO? SHOULD WE NOT AID THE WOMAN--?

THANKS TO HYAKU, HER CRITICAL BATTLE AT THIS POINT IS WITH *HERSELF!*

*"OR DID IT NOT OCCUR TO YOU WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF THE SPIRIT IN THE **MEDALLION** SENSES THAT ITS HOST IS NOT THOROUGHLY CORRUPT???"*

SORRY ABOUT GETTING SO ROUGH, AND I KNOW IT'S HARD FOR YOU TO TRUST ME, BUT YOU GOTTA ASK YOURSELF WHY YOU'VE PUT SO MUCH *FAITH* IN THESE MAKOTO GUYS.

WHAT DO YOU REALLY *KNOW* ABOUT THEM?

YOU... A *BLIND* MAN, QUESTION THIS? ISN'T YOUR EVERY MOVE PREDICATED ON FAITH IN THINGS YOU CANNOT SEE?!

ANOTHER SHOCK. SOMEHOW SHE KNOWS--KNOWS WHO YOU REALLY ARE.

MAYBE SHE'S BEGINNING TO SEE THINGS FOR WHAT THEY REALLY ARE AGAIN.

OKAY, SO SOMEBODY TOLD YOU WHO I AM.

NOW WILL YOU QUIT CALLING ME "DEVIL" AND TRYING TO TAKE MY HEAD OFF?

BUT NO, NO ONE HAD TO TELL ME. DO YOU REALLY THINK THAT A SIMPLE MASK ALLOWS YOU TO DISTANCE YOURSELF FROM OTHERS? ALLOWS YOU TO JUDGE THEM AS YOU JUDGED PETER IN THAT COURTROO—

IT'S--IT'S AS IF I WERE TRYING TO FIGHT MY WAY OUT OF A *NIGHTMARE*...

SUDDENLY YOU HEAR THE BREATH CONSTRICTED IN HER WINDPIPE. AND THERE'S AN ODOR, TOO. FAINT, AT FIRST...

BURNING SULFUR. BETTER KNOWN IN LORE AND LEGEND AS **BRIMSTONE**.

FORGIVE ME, BROTHERS. I HAVE LOST TRACK OF THE VERY DEFINITION OF THE MAKOTO: *OUR SINGLE PURPOSE*. IT IS NOT HYAKU'S FAULT ALONE THAT WE HAVE COME TO THIS JUNCTURE...

...AND NOW WE MUST ACT IN CONCERT TO PROTECT THE WOMAN FROM THE FORCES WE OURSELVES HAVE SUMMONED.

YOUR RADAR SENSE TELLS YOU THAT HALF A DOZEN FIGURES ARE APPROACHING SO SILENTLY THAT EVEN YOUR SUPERHUMAN HEARING MIGHT NOT HAVE DETECTED THEM.

THERE'S NOT MUCH TIME TO ACT.

ANA'S RETURN TO HER SENSES TRIGGERED SOMETHING NASTY IN THAT MEDALLION, TURNING HER CHOKER INTO-- QUITE LITERALLY--A CHOKER!

THAT'S SOLVED EASILY ENOUGH.

SNAP

YET WHEN YOU LISTEN FOR THE BREATH OF LIFE...

... A LITTLE VOICE INSIDE YOU WHISPERS IT'S ALREADY TOO LATE...

...THAT ALL HOPE IS LOST.

OF COURSE YOU REALIZE THAT'S THE TRUE VOICE OF THE DEVIL.

A VOICE THAT, DESPITE YOUR RED COSTUME WITH THE LITTLE HORNS, YOU'VE BEEN FIGHTING YOUR ENTIRE LIFE.

YOU DETECT A QUICKENING IN HER PULSE, AND THE WHISPER OF A THINLY DRAWN BREATH LEAVING HER LUNGS.

THOUGH IT STRIKES YOU AS SLIGHTLY CORNY, YOU REALIZE THAT KILLERS WHO DABBLE IN BLACK MAGIC MIGHT BE RELUCTANT TO FOLLOW YOU DOWN HERE.

AFTER ALL, THIS IS HALLOWED GROUND. SANCTUARY.

THE MASK... GOD SEES RIGHT THOUGH IT...ALL OF US...

SHE'S DELIRIOUS, POSSIBLY IN SHOCK. AND WITH THESE OUTCASTS OF THE HAND CLOSING IN, IT'S DOUBTFUL YOU'LL BE ABLE TO GET HER TO A HOSPITAL.

FORTUNATELY, YOUR RADAR PICKS UP ANOTHER OPTION.

ANA SHOULD BE SAFE...FOR THE TIME BEING. BECAUSE, OF COURSE, THERE'S NO WAY TO TELL WHETHER YOU'VE LOST WHATEVER DEMONS SHE'S CARRYING INSIDE HER HEART.

NO LONGER...

...COLD.

TIRED...

...BUT RESTED.

COLORED LIGHT THROUGH...

...A WINDOW.

A COMFORTING PRESENCE.

IS IT...?

SHRINE OF ST. JUDE

EST. 1938

MOTHER?

HUSH NOW. DON'T TALK IF YOU DON'T HAVE THE STRENGTH.

FOR THREE DAYS YOU'VE BEEN SEMI-CONSCIOUS. WE DIDN'T KNOW WHETHER YOU WERE SUFFERING THE ECSTASY OF ST. THERESA...OR COMING DOWN WITH PNEUMONIA.

AS ALWAYS, SHE KNOWS HOW TO MAKE ME SMILE.

MOTHER, HOW...HOW MUCH DO YOU KNOW?

YOUR QUESTION POINTS TO YOUR REAL PROBLEM, ANA: ACCEPTING FORGIVENESS. IT'S NOT BASED UPON HOW MUCH I KNOW ABOUT YOUR SINS.

TRUE FORGIVENESS IS BASED ON LOVE. IT'S UNCONDITIONAL--LIKE A MOTHER'S LOVE FOR A CHILD...OR GOD'S LOVE FOR EACH OF HIS CHILDREN.

SHE KEEPS TALKING, AND I LISTEN BECAUSE THESE ARE WORDS I NEED TO HEAR, IDEAS I HAVE BEEN AWAY FROM FOR TOO LONG.

SHE TELLS ME THAT A GOOD SHEPHERD DOESN'T LIMIT HOW FAR HE GOES TO RETURN A LOST SHEEP TO THE FLOCK.

THERE IS A CODED MESSAGE HERE. SHE SEEMS TO BE SAYING, "I'M NOT A FOOL, ANA. I'VE ALWAYS KNOWN YOUR GRANDFATHER WAS POINTING YOU ON A VERY DIFFERENT PATH FROM MINE."

IN THE END, SHE CLAIMS WITH UTTER CONVICTION THAT NOTHING I FEEL GUILTY ABOUT MATTERS. ALL I NEED DO IS ASK GOD FOR FORGIVENESS AND I'LL RECEIVE IT.

AND IF AT FIRST YOU DON'T HEAR *HIS* VOICE, LISTEN CAREFULLY. YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO HEAR MINE...

HOPE I'M NOT INTERRUPTING, BUT IT SOUNDS LIKE SOMEONE JUST CAME OUT OF HER HIBERNATION!

AND THAT'S JUST HOW IT FELT— THOUGH I DON'T KNOW IF MY DREAMS WERE GOOD OR BAD. ALL I REMEMBER IS FIGHTING A DEVIL...

WHAT DO YOU THINK, FATHER O'SHAUNESSY? A "GOOD WAR" TO FIGHT?

DEPENDS. NOT IF SHE MEANS THE MYSTERIOUS FRIEND WHO BROUGHT HER HERE TO US.

ACTUALLY, YOUNG LADY, IT'S A WEIRD PIECE OF LUCK WHEN YOU LOOK AT IT .

YOUR MOTHER CONTACTED ME FROM JAPAN SEVERAL MONTHS AGO, ASKED ME TO KEEP AN EYE ON YOU IF YOU SHOWED UP HERE. IT SEEMS OUR ST. JUDE HAS LONG HELD A SPECIAL APPEAL FOR YOU.

SO YOU SEE, IN A SENSE THIS IS YOUR HOME... ONE YOUR MOTHER HELPED PROVIDE EVEN IF YOU WEREN'T AWARE OF IT.

OH, AND BEFORE I FORGET--
YOU MISSED CHRISTMAS WHILE YOU WERE SLEEPING, BUT I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT APPRECIATE THIS BELATED GIFT.
I FOUND IT IN OUR COURTYARD THE NIGHT YOU ARRIVED. I DON'T KNOW...MAYBE IT'S A SIGN.
IT-- I'M SURE IT IS.
IT'S NEW YEAR'S DAY BY THE TIME I AM WELL ENOUGH TO LEAVE. DURING MY CONVALESCENCE THE SNOW HAS ACCUMULATED TO MONSTROUS HEIGHTS, AND CATCHING A CAB HOME SEEMS OUT OF THE QUESTION.
APPARENTLY, NO ONE'S INSANE ENOUGH TO BE OUT DRIVING WITH DRIFTS OF MORE THAN A FOOT.
VROOOOOOOOOOOOOOM
WELL, MAYBE THERE'S ONE PERSON CRAZY ENOUGH.
PETER!! WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE? AND SHOULDN'T YOU BE TAKING IT EASY? GUNSHOTS TAKE A LOT OF TIME TO HEAL...
THE GALLERY SAID YOU'VE BEEN "OUT SICK" FOR THE PAST WEEK. YOU WEREN'T HOME, SO I FIGURED IT MIGHT BE A KIND OF SICKNESS OF THE SOUL--
I KNOW YOU COME HERE WHEN YOU'RE TRYING TO SORT THINGS OUT.
AS FOR MY MIRACULOUS RECOVERY, HOP ON. I'LL TELL YOU EVERYTHING OVER LUNCH!
ALL I HAVE TO SAY IS: IT'S A NEW YEAR, SO WE MIGHT AS WELL ENJOY IT!!

BAR & GRILL

openers

...SO YOU MEAN THEY USED SOME KIND OF ESOTERIC HEALING ART ON YOU?

NO...THEY GOT ME BELIEVING IN MYSELF SO THAT I *COULD* HEAL. FIRST I DEALT WITH MY EMOTIONAL SCARS FROM THE TRIAL. ONLY THEN COULD I CONCENTRATE ON HEALING MY *PHYSICAL* SCARS.

BUT DID THEIR INTERVENTION EVER MAKE YOU FEEL OUT OF CONTROL? FEEL--I DON'T KNOW--- *POSSESSED?*

SURE, BUT WHAT'S SO BAD ABOUT THAT? IT'S WHAT THE PRINCIPLE OF "MAKOTO" IS ALL ABOUT-- BEING SO FOCUSED THAT YOU DON'T HAVE ANY DOUBT, LEAST OF ALL IN YOURSELF.

YOU GET ABSORBED IN WHAT YOU'RE DOING. IF YOU WANNA CALL THAT "OBSESSED" OR "POSSESSED" OR WHATEVER, GO AHEAD.

SEE, ANA, ONCE THE MIND DISCIPLINES ITSELF, *ANYTHING* IS POSSIBLE. MIND OVER MATTER, ALL THAT STUFF. HELL, I DON'T HAVE TO TELL *YOU*.

I'M AFRAID YOU DO. I MEAN, I CAN GRASP THE CONCEPT--LETTING GO OF THE INSECURE EGO, DISCOVERING A DEEPER SELF...

EXACTLY. AND YEAH, IT'S SCARY AT FIRST. BUT IN MY CASE, I REALIZED THE PART OF ME THAT WAS SCARED WAS THE PART THAT DIDN'T WANT TO GROW UP.

MOST OF ALL, I WANT TO THANK *YOU* BECAUSE THEY SAID YOU LED THEM TO ME.

I'M TELLING YOU, ANA, IT'S A *GIFT*, IT REALLY IS.

I KNOW IT IS, PETER. I KNOW IT IS.

...SO THE BOTTOM LINE IS, I GOT ANA THE HELP SHE NEEDED, BUT I BET SHE'S STILL VERY VULNERABLE TO THE INFLUENCE OF THESE GUYS.

WHAT CAN I DO? STAKE OUT HER APARTMENT TWENTY-FOUR HOURS A DAY? WAIT UNTIL THEY SEND HER AFTER ME AGAIN? ONCE SHE'S IN THEIR THRALL, SHE'S IMPOSSIBLE TO REASON WITH—

SO DON'T USE *REASON*. MOST LIKELY THAT WAS YOUR MISTAKE THE FIRST TIME. THE HUMAN SPIRIT IS MORE IMPRESSED WITH ACTIONS, WITH HOW PEOPLE LIVE THEIR LIVES, NOT BY ARGUMENTS.

I REALIZE THAT MAY BE DIFFICULT FOR A LAWYER TO SWALLOW.

"NO, I KNOW YOU'RE RIGHT, MAGGIE. THAT'S WHY I NEED TO LEARN HOW TO DO WHAT YOU DO ALL THE TIME--HELP SOMEONE REGAIN FAITH AND FIGHT INNER DEMONS."

OH, MATT...

DON'T YOU SEE THAT YOUR CONFUSION ABOUT HOW TO HELP OTHERS IS STILL ABOUT YOU?

WHEN YOU SAW ME AT CHRISTMAS YOU HAD DOUBTS ABOUT YOURSELF. HAVE THEY REALLY PASSED SO EASILY?

I THOUGHT THEY HAD. IT'S JUST THAT I FEEL OUT OF MY DEPTH HERE.

MAYBE IF I'D BEEN A MORE DISCIPLINED CHURCHGOER OVER THE YEARS...

YOU DON'T NEED CHURCH TO HAVE FAITH, CHILD. YOU KNOW THAT.

YOU'VE ALWAYS HAD FAITH THAT YOU LIVE FOR A PURPOSE GREATER THAN YOURSELF

I KNOW, BUT UNFORTUNATELY I DON'T HAVE TIME FOR THE USUAL SOUL-SEARCHING.

MAGGIE, YOU MUST KNOW WHAT I CAN *SAY* TO HER... SOME, I DON'T KNOW, PSALM OR SOMETHING, THAT'LL TOUCH THE CHRISTIAN PART OF HER.

...AFTER ALL, HOW CAN YOU EXPECT HER TO LOOK INTO *HER* HEART WITHOUT YOU FIRST LOOKING INTO *YOURS*?

YOU WANT MAGIC WORDS AND MUMBO JUMBO? WELL, IT DOESN'T WORK THAT WAY. A GOOD MAN SHOULD HAVE FAITH IN THE SOURCE OF THAT GOODNESS.

AND MATTHEW, IT HONESTLY DOESN'T MATTER TO ME WHETHER YOU THINK THIS SOURCE IS THE SAME GOD I'VE DEVOTED MY LIFE TO.

WHEN THE TIME COMES, *DON'T* THINK ABOUT THE RIGHT WORDS, JUST LET YOUR SPIRIT CALL THE SHOTS...

WHAT THE--? MAGGIE, YOU BETTER STAY HERE. YOU SAID "WHEN THE TIME COMES,"

AND WITH THAT UNMISTAKABLE SCENT OF BRIMSTONE OUTSIDE, I'M TEMPTED TO SAY "*SPEAK OF THE DEVIL*".

HMMM. IT'S AS IF THE ODOR'S DISPERSED... OBSCURING ITS SOURCE...

DOESN'T HELP THAT THIS HEAVY SNOWFALL PLAYS HAVOC WITH MY RADAR SENSE--

THE TIME OF RECKONING IS AT HAND, MURDOCK!

NO! WE'LL BOTH--!!

:UNNNHH:

WHAT HE MOST FEARED HAS BEGUN TO TRANSPIRE--

AS SHE EMBRACES THE DARKNESS SHE'S KEPT IN CHECK HER ENTIRE LIFE.

...IN THE LOWER DEPTHS...

I PRAY TO YOU, ALMIGHTY GOD, THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN PROTECT THEM NOW.

AND EVEN YOUR POWER, I KNOW, IS DIMINISHED...

...OF HELL.

"NOW, MY BROTHERS, THE HOUR OF CONCEPTION IS AT HAND."

EVERYTHING IS IN PLACE. SHE WHO GAVE HERSELF FREELY TO OUR CAUSE WILL SPAWN A NEW GENERATION OF MAKOTO.

O, SACRED TACHI! YOU WILL TRANSFIGURE *EACH DROP OF HER TAINTED BLOOD* INTO *ANOTHER WARRIOR* FOR OUR RANKS!

THE SACRIFICIAL CIRCLE BECOMES A CHALICE FROM WHICH OUR MYSTICAL *FATHER* CAN DRINK DEEPLY!

HYAKU, YOURS IS THE HONOR--ADMINISTER THE *WOUNDS OF LIFE!*

EARLIER, YOU UNJUSTLY BORE THE BRUNT OF A *SHARED* FAILURE. NOW IT IS YOU WHO WILL INITIATE THE PROCESS TO *JOIN* US IN UNBREAKABLE UNION!

SHING

I AM READY. AND IN MOMENTS DAREDEVIL TOO WILL MEET THIS BLADE...

...FOR WHEN OUR NEW BROTHERS AWAKEN THEY WILL FEAST ON THE BLOOD OF A HERO!

DEAR LORD, *AMPLIFY* MY VOICE SO THAT ANA CAN HEAR MY PRAYERS AS CLEARLY AS YOU DO...

ANA, WAKE UP! THE ONLY WAY THEY CAN GET AWAY WITH THIS IS IF YOU STILL FEEL *GUILTY* AND *LOST* AND *ALONE!*

SO DAREDEVIL IS CONSCIOUS AGAIN--*FINISH HIM NOW!!* HIS BLOOD WILL STILL BE WARM WHEN IT IS NEEDED!

"...LET MY DAUGHTER KNOW THAT EVEN IF SHE HAS LOST FAITH IN HER SALVATION..."

"...I HAVE NOT."

"PLEASE, LORD..."

"LET WHATEVER MIRACLES ARE AT YOUR DISPOSAL--"

"--STAY THE HAND OF DEATH FROM FINDING HER."

DESCEND ON DAREDEVIL, MAKOTO! HE MUST NOT INTERFERE--

DESCEND ALL YOU LIKE, BUT "INTERFERING" IS EXACTLY WHAT I'M GONNA DO!

NO MATTER WHAT IT TAKES!

FOOL! SO QUICK TO SACRIFICE YOURSELF, BUT YOU KNOW NOTHING OF *TRUE* SACRIFICE!

ALL YOU'VE DONE IS ENSURE A FAR MORE HORRIBLE DEATH FOR YOURSELF...

...EVEN AS WE GAIN OUR OWN IMMORTALITY!

?

AND WHERE THERE WAS ONCE FLESH THERE IS NOW ONLY SMOKE AND BLOOD!

CONFUSED, HERO? YOU HEAR MY VOICE BUT NOT MY HEARTBEAT

UH-OH.

HEY! IF YOU WANT BLOOD SO BADLY, WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH MINE?

OR DO YOU HAVE A THING FOR UNCONSCIOUS, RESTRAINED WOMEN?

SO THE FALSE DEVIL LONGS TO BE MY FIRST PREY.

VERY WELL.

SLAM

...AND ANA, WHEN YOU FEEL MOST HELPLESS...

"...THAT IS THE CRUCIAL MOMENT."

FOR ONLY THEN WILL YOU FULLY TRUST GOD.

"TRUST IN THE STRENGTH THAT HE PROVIDES."

"TRUST THAT WHATEVER BONDS YOU HAVE FASHIONED FOR YOURSELF IN LIFE..."

"YOU WILL BE FREE!"

TURN, ON!! LEARN WHY YOUR INCARNATION MAKES YOU FAR MORE VULNERABLE THAN WHEN YOU WERE A SPIRIT STEALING MY SOUL!

HURRY, ANA. HIS BREATH...

"AND LASTLY, DEAR LORD, IN THE HEAT OF BATTLE LET YOUR GRACE--NOT HER VIOLENT RAGE--BE ANA'S SHIELD."

"PLEASE LET LOVE POSSESS HER JUST AS YOU, IN YOUR WISDOM, HAVE ALLOWED EVIL TO."

LET HER LOSE CONTROL IN THE NAME OF GOD. FOR THAT IS HER MOST POWERFUL WEAPON AGAINST THE DARKNESS...

WOMAN, WHAT ARE YOU DOING?? YOUR EMBRACE--

NO!!

ANA, STOP! THIS IS CRAZY!

YOU CAN'T SAVE SOMETHING THAT'S ALREADY GIVEN ITSELF TO EVIL!

DO NOT FIGHT ME, DEMON! EVEN *YOUR* SOUL CAN BE DELIVERED INTO THE LIGHT!

NO, MY FRIEND? NOW WHAT IF YOU HAD BELIEVED THE SAME ABOUT *ME*?

I'M SERIOUS, ANA, IT'S TIME TO BAIL! THE TEMPERATURE HAS TRIPPLED IN HERE IN THE LAST FEW SECONDS!

ADD THAT TO THE SULPHUR COMPOUNDS IN THE AIR, AND THIS PLACE IS ABOUT TO GO--

KA

BOOOOM

OH, ANA, WHAT WERE YOU *THINKING*?

HEY, WAIT A MINUTE-- YOUR BREATHING, HEART RATE... DON'T TELL ME YOU DON'T HAVE A SCRATCH ON YOU!

I WAS... *PROTECTED.* ASLEEP, I COULD HEAR A VOICE...AND SEE WHAT YOU DID FOR ME EVEN WITH MY EYES CLOSED.

CAN YOU IMAGINE WHAT THAT'S LIKE?

UH, YEAH. I CAN.

AND THIS THING, THIS MEDALLION-- REALLY JUST SUCH A MUNDANE OBJECT IF THERE'S NO FAITH PLACED IN IT.

TRY TELLING THAT TO MR. SITOSHI! I'M SURE HE'LL BE GRATEFUL TO GET IT BACK!

NOT AS GRATEFUL AS I AM. THANK YOU...

ST. PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL, HIGH ABOVE ROCKEFELLER CENTER. ONE WEEK LATER.

...SO WHY DID YOU WANT TO MEET ME HERE, MATTHEW? DID YOU PROMISE SISTER MAGGIE THAT YOU AND I WOULD START ATTENDING MASS REGULARLY?

NO, SHE WAS JUST HAPPY THAT WE BOTH CAME BACK ALIVE. I'M AFRAID IT'S A LITTLE MORE SERIOUS.

SEE, THERE'S STILL THE MATTER OF PETE DENYSE. I UNWITTINGLY HELPED TIMMONS GET HIM KICKED OFF THE FORCE. MAYBE I CAN UNDO SOME OF THAT DAMAGE.

...THERE'S A *FILE* THAT MY FRIEND BEN URICH GAVE ME...A FILE WITH SOME DIRT ON STEPHEN TIMMONS.

I UNDERSTAND YOUR WISH TO CORRECT A MISTAKE. BUT REMEMBER, PETER DOESN'T KNOW YOU.

HE THINKS MATT MURDOCK IS A HIRED GUN, NOT A MAN CONCERNED WITH JUSTICE. YOU NEED TO TRUST THAT HE'LL SETTLE THIS *HIMSELF.*

A SLIGHT SKIP IN HER HEARTBEAT AS SHE MAKES THIS LAST POINT— AS IF SHE HERSELF ISN'T SURE WHAT THE FUTURE WILL BRING FOR MR. DENYSE*...OR FOR HERSELF.

BUT DOES THAT MEAN YOU NOW HAVE TO TAKE IT UPON YOURSELF TO CHIP AWAY AT HER FAITH IN HERSELF OR HER FRIENDS?

YOUR NAME IS DAREDEVIL AND NOT ONLY IS YOUR HEARING IMPRESSIVE, BUT SO IS YOUR MEMORY. YOU REMEMBER ANA'S WORDS FROM A COUPLE OF WEEKS AGO: YOUR EVERY MOVE DEPENDS ON A KIND OF FAITH, SO WHAT RIGHT DO YOU HAVE TO TAKE THAT AWAY FROM OTHERS?

BESIDES, IT'S A NEW YEAR NOW...TIME FOR EVERYONE TO GET ONE MORE SHOT AT REDEMPTION.

*CHECK OUT THE TCB BONUS ATTACK PREVIEW ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THIS ISSUE!

FINIS.

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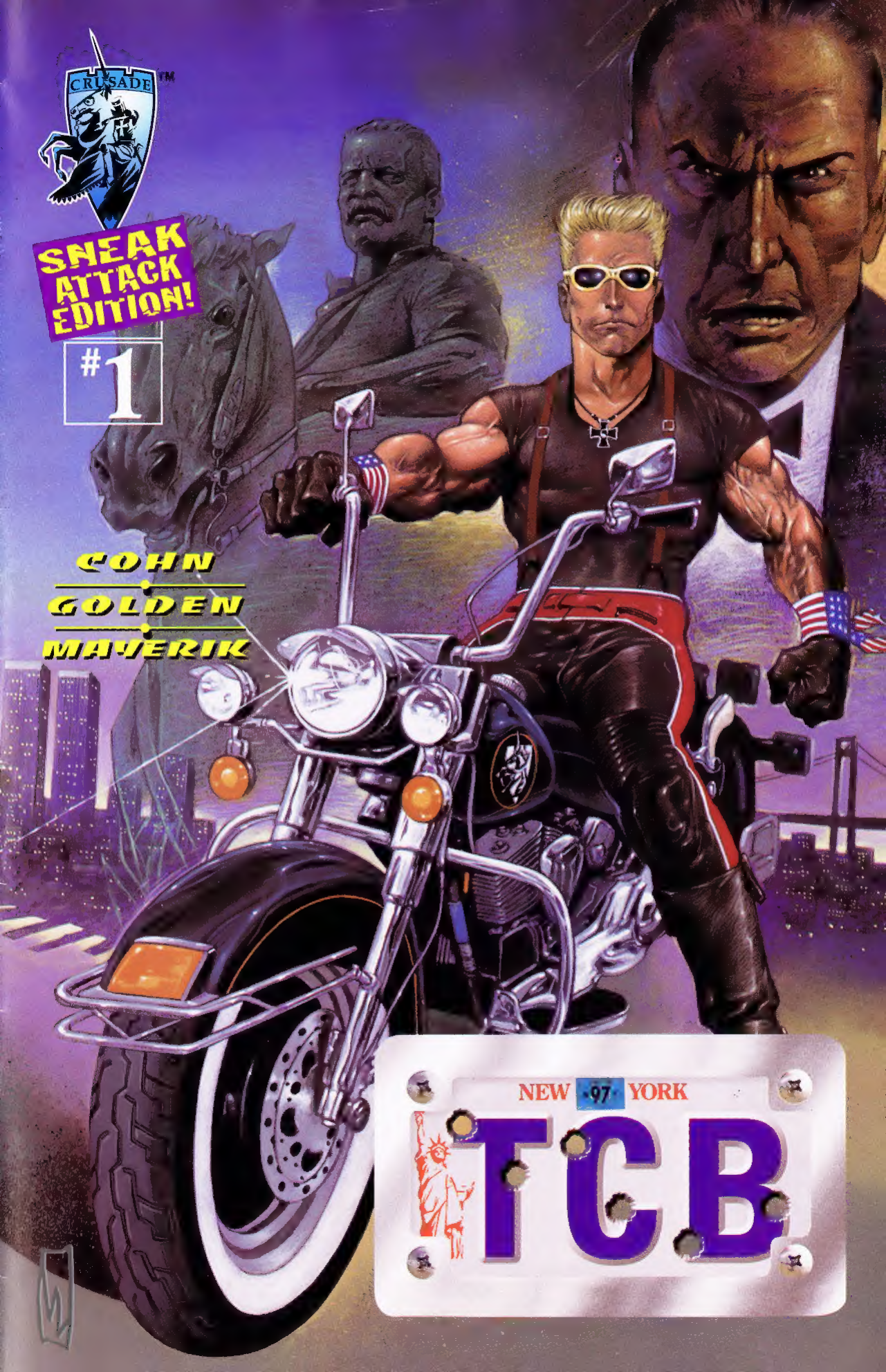
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